UGA turfgrass scientists have developed a new drought-resistant strain of tall fescue.

Survey finds course values softening

By JAY FINEGAN

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Golf course values are stable or declining. The northern states are the new land of opportunity for companies looking to buy golf properties. And private clubs have pulled even with daily-fee facilities as desirable targets in the course acquisition market.

Those are among the findings of a survey by Golf Property Analysts (GPA) here, which polled course management companies, investors and financial institutions involved in funding golf course real-estate transactions.

According to Laurence A. "Larry" Hirsh, whose Hirsh Valuation Group owns GPA, the survey signals that the

Continued on page 30

Despite vandalism and fire, superintendent Szklinski prepares Southern Hills CC for next U.S. Open

By JOHN TORSI ELLO

TULSA, Okla. — Golf fans attending next year’s U.S. Open at Southern Hills Country Club here will likely marvel at the impeccable and challenging beauty of the Perry Maxwell-designed layout. But few will know of the effort and sacrifice made by golf course superintendent John Szklinski, his staff and the membership at Southern Hills, which made the staging of the prestigious event at the Midwestern venue possible.

The Open is back at Southern Hills after a 42-year hiatus. In 1958, playing in sweltering heat, club-throwing Tommy Bolt won his only Open title here, besting a young South African named Gary Player by four strokes. Bolt’s skillful use of his driver on Southern Hills’ tree-lined fairways, fringed by gnarly and deep rough, was the deciding factor.

Continued on page 26

Wild Alaska: Robin Nelson opens course at aptly named Moose Run

By JAY FINEGAN

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — They call Alaska “the last frontier,” and the motto seemed right on the money to golf architect Robin Nelson. He recently unveiled his newest creation, the Creek Course at Moose Run, and he’s still talking about the bears, wolves, lynx, moose and other critters who took a keen interest in the new layout during construction.

Alaska is by far our largest state, and this is a course to match — 7,324 yards from the back tees, 5,183 from the reds, with two holes running to 600 yards or more, and a slope rating near the top of the charts, at 142. The cart paths alone stretch over five miles and cross two suspension bridges where the course traverses Ship Creek. All fairways are separated by at least 300 feet of towering trees and dense brush — there’s no possibility of slicing a drive into an adjacent fairway. The par-72, 18-hole design features dramatic elevation changes and stunning mountain views all around.

“The Creek Course is hardly your basic golf course,” Nelson said. “Every time you come around a corner, there’s a different look and feel to the course and its aesthetics. And there are many strategic options as to how to play each hole.”

The course is situated on the sprawling Army base at Fort Richardson, next to the old Hill Course at Moose Run, built in 1951. The entire 36-hole complex, owned and operated by the military, is open for public play.

“The people in charge up here are real golf fanatics,” Nelson said, referring to the base’s top brass and senior civilian officials. “Four years ago they started soliciting bids for a second course. They had 700 acres and we were supposed to...